

1. (Amended) A distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, the distance-measuring device comprising:

a selection circuit for selecting at least one first measured distance-value by excluding a plurality of second measured distance-values in response to a determination that the plurality of second measured distance-values are not smaller than a predetermined distance value, from individually measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions;

and

a computation circuit for computing an auto-focusing data value in accordance with the at least one first measured distance-value selected by said selection circuit.

2. (Amended) A distance-measuring device according to Claim 1, wherein said computation circuit sets the auto-focusing data value to a value equal to a minimum permissible distance value in response to a determination that the computed auto-focusing data value is smaller than the minimum permissible distance value.

3. (Amended) A distance-measuring device according to Claim 1, wherein said computation circuit computes the auto-focusing data value from a mean value of the at least one first measured distance-value selected by said selection circuit.

4. (Amended) A distance-measuring device according to Claim 1, wherein said computation circuit computes the auto-focusing data value from a majority of the at least one first measured distance-value selected by said selection circuit.

5. (Unamended) A distance-measuring device according to Claim 1, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from a focal distance of a lens used for auto-focusing.

6. (Unamended) A distance-measuring device according to Claim 1, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from an aperture value of a lens used for auto-focusing.

7. (Unamended) A distance-measuring device according to Claim 1, wherein a smallest measured distance-value serves as the auto-focusing data value when the measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions are not smaller than the predetermined distance value and are not selected by the selection circuit.

8. (Amended) A camera including a distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, said camera comprising:

a selection circuit for selecting at least one first measured distance-value by excluding a plurality of second measured distance-values in response to a determination that the plurality of second measured distance-values are not smaller than a predetermined distance value, from individually measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions;

a computation circuit for computing an auto-focusing data value in accordance with the at least one first measured distance-value selected by said selection circuit; and

a driving circuit for driving an image-forming lens in accordance with the auto-focusing data value computed by the computation circuit.

9. (Amended) A camera according to Claim 8, wherein said computation circuit sets the auto-focusing data value to a value equal to a minimum permissible distance value in response to a determination that the computed auto-focusing data value is smaller than the minimum permissible distance value.

15. (Amended) A method of measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions by a distance-measuring device, said method comprising the steps of:
selecting at least one first measured distance-value by excluding a plurality of second measured distance-values in response to a determination that the plurality of second measured distance-values are not smaller than a predetermined distance value, from individually measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions; and
computing an auto-focusing data value in accordance with the selected at least one first measured distance-value.

16. (Amended) A measuring method according to Claim 15, wherein said computing step includes setting the auto-focusing data value to a value equal to a minimum

permissible distance value in response to a determination that the computed auto-focusing data value is smaller than the minimum permissible distance value.

17. (Amended) A measuring method according to Claim 15, wherein said computing step includes computing the auto-focusing data value from a mean value of the selected at least one first measured distance-value.

18. (Amended) A measuring method according to Claim 15, wherein said computing step includes computing the auto-focusing data value from a majority of the selected at least one first measured distance-value.

43. (Amended) A computer usable medium for use with a distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, said computer usable medium having computer readable program code units embodied therein comprising:

a first program code unit for selecting at least one first measured distance-value by excluding a plurality of second measured distance-values in response to a determination that the plurality of second measured distance-values are not smaller than a predetermined distance value, from individually measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions, and

a second program code unit for computing an auto-focusing data value in accordance with the selected at least one first measured distance-value.

44. (Amended) A computer usable medium according to Claim 43, wherein the second program code unit includes a program code unit for setting the auto-focusing data value to a value equal to a minimum permissible distance value in response to a determination that the computed auto-focusing data value is smaller than the minimum permissible distance value.

57. (Amended) A distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, the distance-measuring device comprising:
a selection circuit for selecting at least one measured distance-value for use in focusing by comparing a first measured distance-value of a plurality of individually measured distance-values to a predetermined distance value, wherein if the first measured distance-value is not smaller than the predetermined distance value, said selection circuit compares a second measured distance-value of the plurality of individually measured distance-values to the predetermined distance value and excludes the first measured distance-value from being selected; and
a computation circuit for computing an auto-focusing data value in accordance with the at least one measured distance-value selected by said selection circuit.

58. (Amended) A distance-measuring device according to Claim 57, wherein if the second measured distance-value is not smaller than the predetermined distance value, said

selection circuit excludes the second measured distance-value from being selected and selects a third measured distance-value of the plurality of individually measured distance-values.

59. (Amended) A distance-measuring device according to Claim 57, further comprising an ordering circuit for ordering into a predetermined order the plurality of individually measured distance-values before said selection circuit performs the selection.

60. (Unamended) A distance-measuring device according to Claim 57, wherein said computation circuit sets the auto-focusing data value to a value equal to a minimum permissible distance value when the computed auto-focusing data value is smaller than the minimum permissible distance value.

Please add new Claim 61 as follows:

--61. (New) A distance-measuring device according to Claim 1, further comprising an ordering circuit for ordering into a predetermined order the individually measured distance-values,

wherein said selection circuit performs the selection and exclusion upon the ordered individually measured distance-values in accordance with the predetermined order.--